

Election Reforms effective for 2005 Primary & General Election

Secretary of State Granted Authority to Review County Election Procedures

The Secretary of State is now required to review each county's elections procedures at least once every three years.

Counties are required to respond to review findings in writing, listing the steps that will be taken to correct any problems.

The Secretary of State will then return to the reviewed county prior to the next primary or general election to verify that corrective measures have been taken.

2005 Primary Election Reviews will include Yakima and Spokane counties.

County Legislative Bodies Permitted to Choose All Mail Voting

The County Auditor is allowed to conduct all elections entirely by mail with express authorization from the county legislative authority.

This allows a single system of elections to be conducted in participating counties, dramatically reducing county election costs and limiting the risk of election worker error.

In the September Primary, 28 of Washington's 39 counties will be entirely vote-by-mail.

Adams, Asotin, Benton, Clallam, Clark, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whatcom, Yakima

By the 2005 General Election at least 30 of Washington's 39 counties will be entirely vote-by-mail.

New Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Instructions & Envelopes

All envelopes and ballot instructions that go to overseas and service voters are required to explain:

- ✓ Return postage is free
- ✓ The date of the signature is considered the date of mailing
- ✓ The envelope must be signed by election day
- ✓ The signed declaration may serve as registration
- ✓ The ballot and envelope may be faxed if the voter waives secrecy and the originals arrive prior to certification
- ✓ A ballot may be obtained electronically via the internet.

Ballot Processing Procedures Clarified

- ✓ Voter identification is required at the polls.
Voters will be asked to provide photo identification. Other accepted forms of voter identification include, a voter registration card, a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document. A voter who does not have identification may vote a provisional ballot

- ✓ Requires that provisional and absentee ballots be visually distinguishable from poll-site ballots and either printed on color paper or imprinted with a bar code.
Also, requires provisional and absentee ballots to be incapable of being tabulated by poll-site ballot counters.
- ✓ Ensures that only canvassing boards can reject ballots.
- ✓ Requires state-wide signature verification standards, and training for people who verify signatures
- ✓ Standardizes procedures for fixing missing or mismatched signatures, by requiring the County Auditor to notify the voter by telephone and mail.

In order for the ballot to be counted, the voter must cure the missing or mismatched signature either in person or by mail by the day before certification.

If the second signature still does not match the signature on file, the voter must appear in person to sign a new registration form.

- ✓ Allows the Secretary of State to require all county recounts to be certified on the same day for races that cross county lines.
- ✓ Changes the automatic manual recount threshold for statewide elections from 150 votes to 1,000 votes.
- ✓ Requires clear statements on envelopes that it is illegal to vote if you are not a citizen, a felon who has not had the voting right restored, or to vote or sign on behalf of someone else
- ✓ Makes knowingly destroying, altering, defacing, concealing or discarding a completed voter registration form or signature affidavit a gross misdemeanor.
- ✓ Makes intentionally voting twice a class C felony.
- ✓ Prohibits ballot enhancement and allows duplication only if the voter's intent is clear and duplication is necessary in order for the machine to count the ballot.
- ✓ Requires counties with a population over 75,000 to canvass ballots daily, including Saturdays.
- ✓ Changes the certification period for General Elections from 15 days to 21 days.
- ✓ A reconciliation report is required at the time of certification that includes the number of registered voters, ballots counted, provisional ballots issued, provisional ballots counted, provisional ballots rejected, absentees issued, absentees counted, absentees rejected, federal write-ins counted, Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) ballots issued, UOCAVA ballots counted, and UOCAVA ballots rejected.
- ✓ Requires a second reconciliation report 30 days after certification that includes the number of registered voters, all voters credited, poll voters credited, provisional voters credited, absentees credited, federal write-ins credited, UOCAVA voters credited.